

Charles J. Hull House, Dining Room Wing
800 South Halsted Street
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1110 A

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CHARLES J. HULL HOUSE,
DINING ROOM WING
(Hull House Dining Room)

HABS No. IL-1110A

Location: 800 South Halstead Street, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

The Hull House Dining Room is located 72' south of the Charles J. Hull House. It is just south of Polk Street, within the boundaries of the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus.

Present Owners: The University of Illinois.

Present Occupants: Most of the time the Dining Room is unoccupied.

Present Use: Occasionally the main room is used for meetings or social events. Slide programs on the history of the Hull House are regularly given in two small rooms upstairs.

Significance: The Hull House Dining Room is a handsome, beautifully restored building. The only one remaining of twelve designed by Irving K. and Allen B. Pond for the Hull House Settlement, its geometric simplicity, diamond-mullioned windows, and use of brick tie the building to Chicago's Prairie School tradition.

Historically, the Dining Room is significant because Jane Addams and other noteworthy Hull House residents regularly took meals there.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: The Hull House Dining Room was constructed in 1905.
2. Architect: Architects were Allen B. and Irving K. Pond.
3. Original and subsequent owners:
 - a. Legal description: The Hull House Dining Room is located in the subdivision of Lot 1 in Charles J. Hull's Subdivision of the East 1/2 of Block 11 in Canal Trustees' Subdivision of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 17, Township 39 North, Range 14, East of the Third Principal Meridian.

- b. Chain of Title: The official abstract of the Chain of Title is from Book 474B, pp. 59-60, office of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds. The Dining Room was the property of the Hull House Settlement until the early 1960s when all Hull House property was acquired by the City of Chicago for the University of Illinois (see Historical Information on the Charles J. Hull House for details).
4. Original plans and construction: No original plans of the Hull House Dining Room have been located; there are none at the Burnham Library of the Art Institute of Chicago, as had been thought.
5. Alterations and additions: The restoration of the Hull House Dining Room began in 1963, at the same time as the Hull House mansion. There were only a few exterior changes. Photos prior to 1963 show the building with a stucco, not a brick, second story. Another major change was an addition containing a stairway and storage area at the east end of the building. Formerly located there was a party wall between the dining room and music school.

Before demolition of the settlement's other buildings, the Dining Room was located some 200' northwest of its present site, roughly behind the mansion, connected to it by an "L" shaped hallway. The building is now 72' south of the house and is connected by a covered walkway. It was moved August 1, 1963, by the Belding Engineering Company.

At the Hull House are several blueprints drawn up by the architectural firm of Frazier, Raftery, Orr and Fairbank, available for public use. They show the 1963 restoration plans for the Dining Room.

B. Historical Context: See data on the Charles J. Hull House.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Hull House Dining Room is the only remaining structure of the twelve Pond and Pond designed for the Hull House. These buildings, constructed specifically for a functioning settlement house, were representative of their time. The Dining Room stands as an example of a building that looks as it did when Jane Addams and her contemporaries worked there. The Hull House itself cannot claim this distinction.
2. Condition of fabric: The Dining Room is in mint condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Hull House Dining Room is two stories high with a basement. To the top of the roof it stands 32', to the gutterline, 22'. Dimensions of the building are approximately 30'x 62', the long sides facing north and south.
2. Foundations: The Dining Room rests on new concrete foundations.
3. Walls: The Hull House Dining Room has been refaced in dark red brick. There is no applied ornament. Instead, proportion and the general shape and placement of functional features-- windows, downspouts, gables, etc.-- are what make the exterior visually interesting.
4. Structural system, framing: The structure is apparently of wood frame construction.
5. Porches: On the west side of the Dining Room there is the 156' long, 9' wide covered walkway connecting the building to the Hull House. On the east side two doors lead to a 4' wide stoop with a wrought-iron railing.
6. Chimneys: An old chimney on the west side of the Dining Room was removed and replaced by one on the east. The new chimney is of brick, approximately 4' high and 3' square.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are three doorways, two single doors on the east side of the building, one set of double doors opening onto the covered walkway, on the west. This is the main entrance. The double doors each have two inset panels and a glass transom.
 - b. Windows: All windows in the Dining Room are on the north and south sides of the building. There are nine, capped by brick segmental arches on the first floor, six with flat lintels on the second. Windows that used to be on the building's west facade have been bricked up.

Although the windows vary in size, each is mullioned, dividing the windows in square panes below and a diamond shaped pane above.
8. Roof: The Dining Room has a gabled roof covered with asbestos shingles. Three more gables top the second floor windows. Those to the east and west are 6' high by 14' wide; the central gable is 8' high by 17' wide.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The main floor houses only the high-ceilinged dining room, which is approximately 30' x 45'. The only other spaces are two stair halls and an 8' x 9' vestibule on the west.
- b. Second floor: The second floor has been broken up into two 17' x 20' meeting rooms that can be converted into one large room by means of sliding doors. The rest of the floor is made up of stairways, a vestibule hall, a 6' x 44' corridor and storage closets.

2. Stairways: Stairways in the Dining Room building only serve as access routes; there is nothing distinctive about them. One is on the west side of the building, one on the east. Since the main entry to the upstairs meeting room is on the west, the wall treatment there is slightly more attractive, burlap instead of painted cinderblock.

3. Flooring: The downstairs vestibule leading to the dining room has a brick floor. Hardwood flooring in narrow strips is found in the room itself. The upstairs is carpeted.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Only the actual dining room deserves special mention. Up to door height, at approximately 7', there are rectangular wood panels painted green. The plaster wall above is white. Beams painted green ornament the ceiling.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The Dining Room doors are painted green to match the room's walls. On the east side of the room the door is paneled. All hardware is brass.

b. Windows: (Not recorded).

6. Interior trim: A shallow, 7' high, brick fireplace is located at the east end of the dining room. The room itself is beautifully and simply furnished, with three large oak tables and bentwood chairs, much as it was when the room was used by Hull House residents. Objects of pewter, copper and brass, that were sent to Miss Addams as gifts, decorate the room. These include teapots, samovars, plates, pitchers and candelabras.

7. Mechanical equipment:

a. Lighting: The dining room is lit by six original hanging fixtures of frosted glass and black wrought iron.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation:

The Dining Room is located just south of the Hull Mansion within the confines of the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus. Against the concrete backdrop of the school buildings, both the Hull House and the Dining Room look out of context and give little feel for what the settlement really looked like.

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